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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Pre-sessional working group
Sixty-fifth session
7-11 March 2016

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Report of the pre-sessional working group

1. It is the practice of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to convene a pre-sessional working group for five days to prepare lists of issues and questions relating to the initial and periodic reports that will be considered by the Committee at one of its future sessions.

2. The Committee decided that the pre-sessional working group for the sixty-fifth session of the Committee would meet from 7 to 11 March 2016, immediately after the sixty-third session, in order to ensure that sufficient time would be available to States parties to submit their written replies to the lists of issues and questions, as well as to ensure their timely translation.

3. The following experts were designated as members of the pre-sessional working group and attended the session:

Magalys Arocha Dominguez

Lilian Hofmeister

Ismat Jahan

Dalia Leinarte

Lia Nadaraia (replacing Pramila Patten)

4. The pre-sessional working group elected Ms. Jahan as its Chair. Ms. Leinarte served as Chair during the adoption of the list of issues and questions in relation to the eighth periodic report of Bangladesh.

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5. The pre-sessional working group prepared lists of issues and questions with regard to the reports of Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi, Canada, Estonia, Honduras, the Netherlands and Switzerland. In that regard, it was guided by Committee decision 49/IX, according to which the Committee decided to limit such lists to 20 questions. In practice and exceptionally, some lists contain a maximum of 22 questions. The pre-sessional working group also prepared a list of issues and questions on the implementation of the Convention in Antigua and Barbuda, given the decision of the Committee to proceed with the consideration of the subject in the absence of a report, the State party not having submitted its overdue fourth to seventh periodic reports by 31 January 2016. In accordance with its decisions 58/II, 59/IV and 60/IX, the Committee, on a pilot basis, prepared a list of issues and questions prior to reporting under its optional simplified reporting procedure, namely a list of issues and questions prior to the submission of the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Romania. In that regard, it was guided by its decision 59/IV, according to which the Committee decided to limit such lists to 25 questions.

6. To assist in the preparation of the lists of issues and questions, the pre-sessional working group had before it the reports of the States parties listed above, with the exception of Antigua and Barbuda and Romania, in addition to the core documents of most of those States parties; the general recommendations adopted by the Committee; background information and draft lists of issues and questions prepared by the secretariat; and other pertinent information, including concluding observations of the Committee and other treaty bodies, if relevant. In preparing the lists, the pre-sessional working group paid particular attention to the States parties' follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee on their previous reports.

7. The pre-sessional working group benefited from written and oral information submitted by entities and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions.

8. The lists of issues and questions adopted by the pre-sessional working group were transmitted to the States parties concerned and are contained in the following documents:

(a) List of issues and questions in relation to the seventh periodic report of Argentina (CEDAW/C/ARG/Q/7);

(b) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Armenia (CEDAW/C/ARM/Q/5-6);

(c) List of issues and questions in relation to the eighth periodic report of Bangladesh (CEDAW/C/BGD/Q/8);

(d) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Bhutan (CEDAW/C/BTN/Q/8-9);

(e) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Burundi (CEDAW/C/BDI/Q/5-6);

(f) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Canada (CEDAW/C/CAN/Q/8-9);

(g) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Estonia (CEDAW/C/EST/Q/5-6);

(h) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Honduras (CEDAW/C/HND/Q/7-8);

(i) List of issues and questions in relation to the sixth periodic report of the Netherlands (CEDAW/C/NLD/Q/6);

(j) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Switzerland (CEDAW/C/CHE/Q/4-5);

(k) List of issues and questions in the absence of the combined fourth to seventh periodic reports of Antigua and Barbuda (CEDAW/C/ATG/Q/4-7).

9. The list of issues and questions prior to the submission of the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Romania (CEDAW/C/ROU/QPR/7-8) will be submitted to the Committee for approval at its sixty-fourth session (4-22 July 2016) before being transmitted to the State party.

10. In accordance with Committee decisions 22/IV, 25/II and 31/III, the lists of issues and questions focused on themes addressed by the Convention. Those themes include the constitutional and legislative framework; women and peace and security, where applicable; national machinery for the advancement of women; stereotypes and harmful practices; violence against women, including domestic violence; trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution; participation of women in decision-making; nationality; education and training; employment; health; social and economic benefits; rural women; the situation of disadvantaged groups of women, such as older women, women with disabilities, women belonging to ethnic minorities and refugee and migrant women; equality before the law; and marriage and family relations.